


## STRATEGIES FOR MEETING THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH

Making It Happen: Whatever It Takes  
Title I Conference Boise, Idaho  
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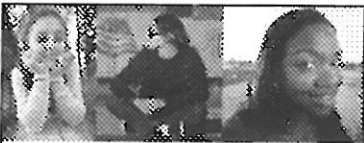


## McKinney-Vento 101 Review

✓ Reauthorized in 2002 as part of the NCLB Act

**Main themes:**


- School stability.
- School access.
- Support for academic success.
- Child/Youth-centered, best-interest decision making.



### Who are Unaccompanied Children and Youth Under the McKinney-Vento Act?

- ✓ Children and youth who **lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence**—
  - Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason.
  - Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, camping grounds due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations.
  - Living in emergency or transitional shelters.
  - Abandoned in hospitals.
  - Awaiting foster care placement.
  - Living in a public or private place not designed for humans to live.
  - Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations, etc.
  - Migratory children living in above circumstances.

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### Who are Unaccompanied Children and Youth Under the McKinney-Vento Act?

They are children and youth who are  
**unaccompanied** and  
**experiencing homelessness.**

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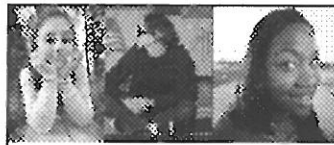
## Who are Unaccompanied Children and Youth Under the McKinney-Vento Act?

- ✓ **Unaccompanied Youth:** children and Youth experiencing homelessness and not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.
- ✓ **Is there an age range?**  
No. McKinney-Vento applies to all school-aged children and youth as defined by state law.
- ✓ **Is there a citizenship requirement?**  
No. Supreme Court case *Plyler v. Doe* (1982) makes it unlawful for schools to deny access to undocumented immigrants or ask about immigration status. McKinney-Vento must be equally applied to undocumented students.



## Who are Unaccompanied Children and Youth in your Community?

- **Family Separation**
- **Parental Incarceration**
- **Illness, hospitalization, death**
- **Economics**
  - Youth are leaving home or being asked to leave to free up resources for younger siblings.
- **Pregnancy**
  - 10% of currently homeless female teenagers are pregnant.
- **Abuse/Neglect**
  - 20-40% were sexually abused in their homes.
  - 40-60% were physically abused.
  - 21-53% have a history of child welfare placement.
- **Family Dysfunction**
  - Over 2/3 of callers to the Runaway Hotline report at least one parent abuses drugs or alcohol.
  - Over 1/2 of youth living in shelters report that their parents told them to leave or didn't care.
  - Many youth have been thrown out because of their sexual orientation (20-40% identify as GLBTQ).



### What education barriers do Unaccompanied Children and Youth face?

- ✓ Lack of a parent or guardian.
- ✓ Lack of school records and other paperwork.
- ✓ Lack of stable housing.
- ✓ Emotional crisis / mental health issues.
- ✓ Employment - need to balance school and work.
- ✓ Lack of transportation.
- ✓ Lack of school supplies, clothing.
- ✓ Fatigue, poor health, hunger.
- ✓ Credit accrual policies, attendance policies.
- ✓ Concerns about being apprehended by authorities.



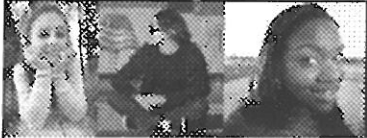
### What is the Impact of Homelessness on Unaccompanied Children and Youth?

With each move fall **4 to 6 months** behind academically.

**1 in 10** report being raped.

**1 in 100** die each year, the vast majority from suicide.

**less likely** to participate in extracurricular activities and **more likely** to get into trouble.

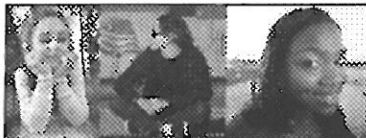


### Local Education Agencies Roles & Responsibilities

**Under McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison's must:**

- ✓ **Identify** unaccompanied children and youth (including those not attending school) through school and community.
- ✓ Help them select and **enroll** in school.
- ✓ Help them **attend** school.

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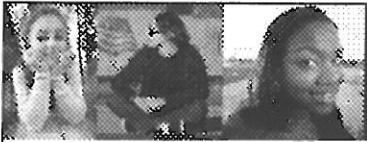


### Local Education Agencies Roles & Responsibilities

**How do liaisons help unaccompanied children and youth attend school?**


- ✓ Inform them of rights to transportation to the school of origin and assist with arranging transportation.
- ✓ Work with school counselors and administrators to modify class schedules to meet student needs (late arrival, early departure, online classes, etc.).
- ✓ Inform youth of right to appeal school selection decisions counter to their wishes.
- ✓ Inform school personnel of requirements of the law and needs of unaccompanied children and youth.
- ✓ Ensure youth have a full opportunity to *succeed* in school.

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### What are potential signs that a child or youth may be homeless?

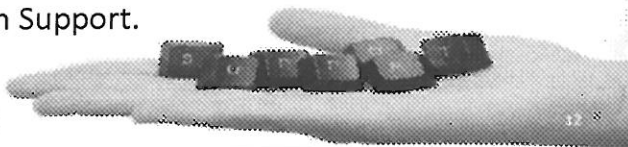
- ✓ Chronic hunger and fatigue.
- ✓ Erratic attendance and tardiness.
- ✓ Grooming and personal hygiene/tattered clothing.
- ✓ Consistent lack of preparation for school—coming in without books, supplies, homework completed, or papers signed.
- ✓ Extremes in behavior—withdrawal, extreme shyness, nervousness, aggression, anger.
- ✓ Resistant to parting with personal possessions.

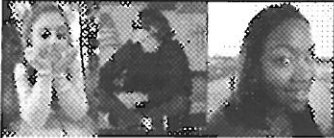


### Providing support IN school...

#### Strategies to Assist

- ✓ Education Planning:
  - What is the best school for the student?
- ✓ Credit Accrual:
  - Are there credits missing from student's transcript?
  - Partial credit earned or in progress?
- ✓ Attendance Issues:
  - Flexible schedule needed?
- ✓ Transportation Support.






## Practices that Ensure Full Participation

- ✓ The McKinney-Vento Act requires that homeless students be immediately enrolled in school, including full participation in all classes and school activities.
- ✓ Help youth become involved in school sports, clubs, extra-curricular activities, and special classes, based on their interests and abilities.
- ✓ Ensure that deadlines and fees for participating in school programs, classes and extra-curricular activities are waived for homeless children and youth.
- ✓ Use Title I, Part A funds, donations, or other funding to help pay fees.
- ✓ Decide who can make decisions for an unaccompanied youth regarding participation in classes, activities, field trips, etc.?
- ✓ Determine or establish policy about who can make decisions for an unaccompanied youth regarding participation in classes, activities, field trips, etc.

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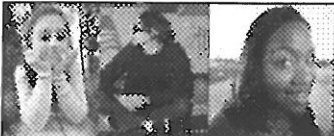


## Education Planning

**Educational Planning** is designed to help students get the most out of their high school experience and prepare them for higher education and/or employment. The following strategies may be used to assist unaccompanied youth with educational planning:

- ✓ Ensure that students have access and understand to the district's education planning guide.
- ✓ Review transcripts from each school attended to ensure credits received were properly transferred.
- ✓ Assist students with determining post high school plans:
  - ✓ Employment
  - ✓ Vocational Training
  - ✓ Community/Jr. College
  - ✓ 4 Year College or University
- ✓ Identify elective courses needed for chosen career plans.
- ✓ Assist with completing FAFSA


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### Helping youth feel productive and valued: Credit accrual

- ✓ **The school/district must help unaccompanied youth make up lost credits and accrue credits.**
  - McKinney-Vento requires that schools and districts remove barriers to enrollment and retention-- barriers to accruing credits fall under this requirement.
  - Many unaccompanied youth are absent or tardy due to homelessness, often resulting in youth not earning credits due to credit accrual policies.
  - Some youth miss long periods of school due to their struggle to meet their own basic needs, making it difficult to earn credits.

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### Helping youth feel productive and valued: Credit accrual

#### **How can schools help unaccompanied youth make up lost credits?**

- ✓ Revise credit accrual policies to excuse absences and tardies caused by homelessness.
- ✓ Award partial credit for work completed.
- ✓ Offer flexible school hours, particularly evening hours.
- ✓ "Chunk" credits into smaller time frames, so youth can earn some credits every 3 or 4 weeks.
- ✓ Award credit for employment.
- ✓ Provide independent study opportunities.
- ✓ Provide self-paced computerized learning opportunities, attached to regular HS programs.
- ✓ Partner with local community colleges and universities ("middle college high schools").
- ✓ These initiatives can be funded with M-V funds and Title IA set-aside funds, as well as potential partnerships with dropout prevention/recovery programs, adult education, 21st Century Learning Centers, and other programs.

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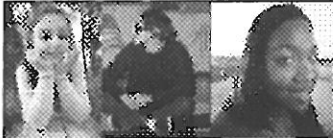


## Attendance Issues

**How can schools help unaccompanied youth address attendance issues?**

- ✓ Provide alternative means of transportation.
- ✓ Monitor attendance closely.
- ✓ Track moves.
- ✓ Attend readmit conferences.
- ✓ Assist with exigent circumstances that may be hindering students from attending school (i.e. childcare, housings, mental/mental health, etc.).

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## Transportation Support

**How can schools help unaccompanied youth address transportation challenges?**

- ✓ Establish a strong collaboration between Homeless Liaison and district's Transportation Supervisor.
- ✓ Establish a strong collaboration between neighboring districts.
- ✓ Explore alternative transportation options:
  - Special routes within district
  - Public transportation
  - Private transportation
  - Transportation vouchers
  - Reimbursement for mileage

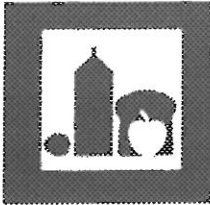
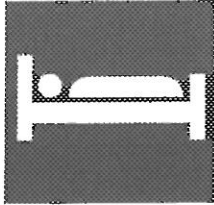

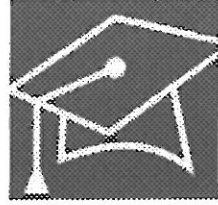
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**Providing support OUT of school...**

***So youth can succeed IN school!***

- Food Stamps & TANF
- Child Support
- SSI
- Housing
- FASFA & Higher Education



**Be aware of public benefits  
that can help unaccompanied youth**

**Food Stamps**

- ✓ The food stamp program provides funds that youth can use to buy food at grocery stores, certain retail stores, and some restaurants.
  - No age minimum.
  - No parent signature required.
  - No denial solely due to lack of address/photo id.
  - Eligibility based on "household," not family.
  - "Couch surfing" youth can be considered individually as their own household.

**TANF and Unaccompanied Youth**

- ✓ Temporary Aid for Needy Families (may have a different acronym in some states): for low-income parents, including teen parents, and their children.
- ✓ A teen can apply without his/her parents.
- ✓ Parents' income is irrelevant for eligibility.
- ✓ There is a lifetime limit on TANF after 18th birthday.

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## Be aware of public benefits that can help unaccompanied youth

### TANF Continued

- ✓ States have their own specific requirements.
- ✓ Generally, Teens must be:
  - Pregnant or parenting,
  - Living with parent, legal guardian, adult relative, or other **approved, adult-supervised living situation**,
  - Attending school or working, and
  - Citizen, LPR or some other immigrants.

### Child Support

- ✓ Teens who receive TANF have to comply with efforts to get child support from the noncustodial parent.
- ✓ Teens not on TANF can get help to secure child support from the State.
- ✓ <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/>

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## Public Benefits Continued & Potential Housing Options

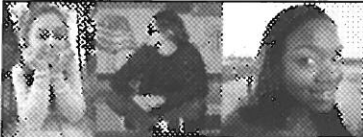
### SSI and unaccompanied youth

- ✓ Supplemental Security Income: the only public benefit that provides a monthly cash payment to a single unaccompanied youth with disabilities.
- ✓ May receive SSI benefits in addition to TANF.
- ✓ Youth who receive SSI are also automatically eligible for Medicaid.
- ✓ Youth between the ages of 16 & 18 may sign their own applications, as long as they are: mentally competent, have no court appointed representative, and are not in the care of another person or institution.

### Housing

- ✓ Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA):
  - Basic Center 15-day emergency shelters.
  - Transitional Living Programs for youth 16-21.
  - No income limits.
  - Youth can enter without parental consent, but the program must contact parents within 72 hours.

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## FAFSA & Higher Education

- ✓ Youth who meet the definition of “independent student” can complete the FAFSA without parental income information or signature.
- ✓ Unaccompanied youth are automatically considered independent students.
  - Must be verified as unaccompanied and homeless during the school year in which the application is submitted.
- ✓ Youth who are unaccompanied, at risk of homelessness, and self-supporting are also automatically considered independent students.
  - Must be verified as such during the school year in which the application is submitted.

**Verification must be made by:**

- a McKinney-Vento Act school district liaison,
- a HUD homeless assistance program director or their designee,
- a Runaway and Homeless Youth Act program director or their designee, or
- a financial aid administrator.
- Sample verification at [www.naehcy.org/higher\\_ed](http://www.naehcy.org/higher_ed).

- ✓ Youth who in foster care at any time after age 13 are also considered independent students.

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## Providing support OUT of school...

### Legal Issues

- Emancipation
- Medical and Mental Health Care
- Immigration
- Child Welfare
- Juvenile Justice





## Can Unaccompanied Youth Consent for their own Health Care?

### Emancipation

- ✓ Available in many states.
- ✓ Specific requirements depend on state, include:
  - Minimum age,
  - Living apart from parents and supporting self,
  - In best interest to be emancipated,
  - Married or in military usually automatically emancipated.
- ✓ Youth obtain both legal rights and responsibilities of adults.

### Health Care

- ✓ Generally, only persons age 18 and over can consent to their own medical, dental, and health care; minors need consent of a parent or guardian.
- ✓ BUT, many exceptions exist, depending on the state and the type of treatment.
- ✓ Typically, minors can consent to these kinds of treatment, with limitations:
  - Diagnosis and treatment of STDs, including HIV/AIDS,
  - Abortion,
  - Substance abuse and mental health treatment.
  - Emergency treatment,
  - Any medical treatment of the youth's own child.

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## Possible Remedies for Immigrant Children and Youth

- **Special Immigrant Juvenile Status** - provides lawful permanent residency to children who are under the jurisdiction of a juvenile court and cannot be reunified with one or both parents due to abuse, neglect, abandonment or a similar basis in state law.
- **Violence Against Women Act** - permits certain abused family members of U.S. citizens or permanent residents to self-petition for a green card without the cooperation of the abuser.
- **U Visas** - U nonimmigrant status (the "U Visa") is for noncitizens who are victims of serious crimes and can be helpful in the investigation or prosecution of those crimes.
- **T Visas** - T nonimmigrant status (the "T Visa") is for noncitizens who have been the victims of severe forms of human trafficking.
- **Asylum** - Asylum is for noncitizens who fear persecution in their home country because of their race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group.
- **Temporary Protected Status** - Noncitizens from certain countries that have experienced devastating natural disaster, civil war or other unstable circumstances may be able to obtain Temporary Protected Status (TPS).
- **Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)** - the government will not place eligible individuals into removal proceedings for a period of two years. Under DACA there is a possibility of renewal. Eligible individuals can apply for work authorization.

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## Can the child welfare system help unaccompanied youth?

**Most child welfare agencies offer programs to assist youth as they transition out of the child welfare system:**

- ✓ Youth who age out of care at age 18 are eligible for services.
  - Youth who are placed in kinship guardianship or adopted after age 16 are also eligible.
  - Transition planning should begin early!
  - Fight to keep cases open!
- ✓ Eligibility for most programs can extend up to age 21 or 23.
- ✓ Youth in care who have absconded from placements still may be eligible for programs and benefits.
- ✓ Older youth may not want child welfare involvement; fear of child welfare referrals often creates a barrier to school enrollment for youth.

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## Juvenile Justice Issues


### Status Offenses

- ✓ Running away is a status offense in a few states, as is truancy.
- ✓ Schools are required to report runaway youth to law enforcement in very few states.
- ✓ Even where not a status offense, in many states runaway youth may be taken into custody by a police officer, under certain circumstances.

### CHINS, PINS, CHIPS and YINS

- ✓ Youth determined by law to need services through the juvenile court.
- ✓ Varies by state; may include youth who have run away without just cause, are beyond parent/guardian control, or are habitually truant.
- ✓ Youth may be referred to the process by law enforcement, schools, child welfare, youth services, parents, or the youth themselves.
- ✓ Can provide services to youth and family, but can also be punitive.

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### Contact Information

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